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SPECIFIC ACTION IN STUDYING AND OVERCOMING

RELIGIOUS SURVIVALS

By Ye. F. Murav'yev  
and Yu V. Dmitriyev

-USSR-

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SPECIFIC ACTION IN STUDYING AND OVERCOMING  
RELIGIOUS SURVIVALS

Following is the translation of an article  
by Ye. F. Murav'yev and Yu. V. Dmitriyev in  
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A resolution of tasks associated with the ideological struggle against the religious viewpoint and with an atheistic education of the workers in many ways depends on how specific our scientific-atheistic propaganda is. This presupposes a profound investigation of questions on the contemporary state of religiousness in our country, on the forms and methods of activity of the religious organizations, and on the nature of the present day religious ideology.

This article is intended to shed some light on certain of these questions.

Gains made by the October Revolution, the liquidation of exploiting classes in our country, as well as the liquidation of private property destroyed the social basis which supported the church. The revolution deprived the Russian Orthodox Church of extensive land holdings and financial wealth, which it possessed under tsarism, as the largest property owner.

The growth and development of socialist transformations in our country, a victory of the policy for an industrialization of the country as well as the collectivization of agriculture undermined the social roots of religion, which were the most profound sources of religiousness for the workers. Socialist transformations in the economy, successes of the cultural revolution led to a situation where the dominant viewpoint in our country became a scientific and materialistic one. Due to the successes of socialist and communist construction and of the propaganda and educational work by the Communist Party, religion, as a residue of the old ideology, is gradually being displaced by a scientific viewpoint in the sphere of the workers' social consciousness.

In the course of the development of a socialist society, the relationships of the leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church and of other religious organizations with the Soviet Government have undergone material change. The direct support of counter-revolutionary forces during the October Socialist Revolution,

during the years of the civil war and during the first years of the building of socialism, was gradually replaced by them with a feeling of loyalty towards the Soviet Government. This change, which was first noted in the 20's, was basically completed during the Great Patriotic War.

At the present time there are remnants of various religions in the USSR -- christianity, islamism, buddhist-lamaism, and judaism. The largest religious organization in our country is the Russian Orthodox Church. Sectarianism is also comparatively widespread, an especially large one is the evangelic christian baptist sect. Most of the religious organizations, with the exception of a certain group of religious functionaries and a number of sects, are at the present time loyal to the Soviet Government.

During the years of Soviet power, as a result of the radical change in social and economic conditions along with a rise in the cultural level of the people, a gradual process, whereby the believers slowly drew away from religion, took place. This process became especially intensified during the prewar years. It must be noted that the Great Patriotic War had a tremendous influence on the growth of political consciousness of the masses and on Soviet patriotism. It was conducive to a strengthening of the political-moral unity of our society. Along with that, however, the extensive ordeals experienced during the Patriotic War had a negative effect on the masses' movement towards atheism. The death of loved ones and relatives, the grief of millions, could not fail to bring about a turn towards religion for a certain part of the workers, to revive hope for help by supernatural forces.

A certain animation of religious feelings and superstitions was observed among some of the workers. The consequence of renewed activity by the religious personnel and inadequate atheistic propaganda resulted in a relative increase in the number of believers-sectarians (transferring into sects primarily from orthodox organizations, as well as from the ranks of the vacillating) in certain regions of our country; the influence of the capitalist camp also intensified this process.

Prior to the Great Patriotic War our anti-religious press sometimes incorrectly reflected the growth of atheism among the workers of the USSR. Successes attained in drawing the masses away from religion were truly extensive at that time. But these successes were overevaluated. And most important, this withdrawal from religion was not always consolidated, which brought about a relapse of religious feeling during the Great Patriotic War and during the postwar period.

From this it is possible to make a conclusion that the necessary process of withdrawal of the believers from religion is complex and contradictory. The atrophy of old ways, as commonly known, never proceeds smoothly. Quite on the contrary,

there is usually a violent struggle for survival by the forces of old and outbreaks and relapses of the past. The defenders of the old ways always use the least weakening in the ideological work to intensify the influence of bourgeois ideology on the masses of people.

Due to the successful building of communism, the development of science and technology, as well as due to the results yielded by increased activities in scientific-atheistic work, intensified control over the observance of Soviet laws pertaining to religious cults and a rectification of errors that were allowed to occur with regard to this question, a tendency towards a weakening in the religious feelings of the population has been observed recently. This points out the fact that a certain revival of religious moods in some cases is principally caused by an intensified activity of the religious organizations and inadequate scientific-atheistic propaganda among the workers. On the other hand, an intensification of our atheistic work leads to decrease in religious feelings among the population.

For a more precise characterization of the religiousness of the population of our country it is first necessary to become better acquainted with the demographic data.

It must be noted with regret that studies of religiousness of the population of our country were not conducted during the postwar period, therefore general data regarding the form and degree of religiousness among the workers, peasants and intelligentsia is absent. This reveals the general backwardness of the ethnographic study of contemporary socialist life of the population of the USSR. Prof. S.A. Tokarev, a well known Soviet ethnographer, the author of a recently published work entitled "An Ethnography of the Peoples of the USSR", points out that there are "gaping omissions" in this type of study. Even though the factual material is accumulating, it is not subjected to a scientific and theoretical generalization. Due to such a condition of the scientific elaboration of this problem, in this article we employ facts that were gathered on a basis of personal observations and investigations.

#### Specific Action in Studying the Vestiges of Religion.

Even though these facts do bear a local character, they still permit reference to certain general phenomena.

Before engaging in a demographic characterization of the religiousness of the population it is necessary to reveal, in general terms, what a present day religious person represents, one who may be considered to be a believer at the present time.

The fact that the demeanor of the believer has changed through the years of Soviet power may not be ignored. At the present time a faithful kolkhoz member or a worker are first of all toilers of Soviet society, who take a direct part in the

building of communism. The socialist ideology could not fail to have an effect on the consciousness of the believers. A general rise in the cultural level of the population led to a point where certain scientific knowledge, socialist ideas and religious superstitions, which assume extremely different forms for various people, became intertwined in a grotesque manner in the consciousness of the believer.

A sense of Soviet patriotism is a feature of all citizens of our country, including the believers. Political consciousness is growing among the population of the USSR; it is also growing among a majority of the believers. But the force of old tradition, the old, well entrenched religious superstitions, hinder the growth of such consciousness.

A radical change in the living conditions of the workers, an expansion of the atheistic movement, an exposure of the anti-scientific essence of religion, in many respects had an effect on the believers' attitude towards the essence of a religious viewpoint as well as towards the dogmas and rituals of the church. All of this must be kept in mind when the characteristics of religious moods are discussed.

At the present time it is difficult to determine whether a person is a believer or not. Such external manifestations as attendance at church, observation of rituals and etc., even though they do indicate religiousness, frequently do not reveal the actual degree of religiousness of a certain person.

The complexity and contradictory nature of the process of conversion towards non-belief, towards atheism, may be judged on a basis of the many different types of believers.

The first type, as correctly pointed out by the magazine Sovetskaya Etnografiya (Soviet Ethnography), (See No. 2 of this magazine for 1957), consists of fanatic believers, who actively propagandize and defend their viewpoints, and who are sincerely convinced in the truth of religious teachings and aspire to follow these principles in their lives. This group consists primarily of sectarians, for whom questions pertaining to religion -- are a matter of profound personal conviction; they attempt to educate their children in that spirit. The sectarians consider the family, and especially the women, the principal objects of their influence.

Another type consists of people, who even though they do call themselves believers, do not force their convictions on other people, and who have a tolerant attitude towards atheism. This group of people usually includes those who are beginning to waver in their belief of religious teachings. For most of them a purely formal attitude towards rites, which they conduct more as a tradition than a conscious conviction, is a characteristic. In that sense they are much less religious than the sectarians, who, even though they do not baptize their children (they baptize their children when they come of age), do educate them to

be profoundly believing people.

It is possible to differentiate another type of people, who have to a certain degree been affected by the religious dope. They are people who have personally rejected religion, have broken with it, but are hesitant to discuss it openly, and do not take an open stand against religion because of a false sense of shame, or due to a reluctance to spoil their relationships with relatives or close friends who are believers.

This type of people baptize their children more as an adherence to tradition or because of a fear of criticism by believers. A young woman, M.S. from a Belorussian village of Starosek, for example, answered the question of why she baptized her children like this: "Nobody taught me how to pray, and I do not teach my children how to do that, but everyone baptizes their children, so I baptize mine as well." (Sovetskaya Etnografiya, No. 2, 1957, page 57.)

Therefore a performance of religious rites (baptism, etc.) does not indicate the degree of religiousness of a person. However, a person who pays tribute to religious prejudices as a matter of tradition, may not be called a conscious atheist due to his personal inconsistency. We must help these people to acquire a consistent scientific viewpoint.

In addition to the conscious atheists and believers we also have a large category of wavering people. These people, even though they do not observe religious rites, do not possess firm convictions regarding religion. If they are not re-educated and inculcated with a scientific viewpoint, they may again become believers. The party systematically educates even the most conscientious people of our Soviet society, the communists. It frequently happens with us, that after a person draws away from religion, his re-education, the impression of a materialist viewpoint on his consciousness, are no longer subject to attention. This is what creates favorable conditions for the success of religious propaganda among the segment of those who are vacillating.

All of this must be kept in mind when analyzing facts of demographic order, that characterize the various social levels of our society from the point of view of the distribution of religious remnants among them.

We have the following data for the Kremenetskaya community (Ternopol'skaya Oblast), for instance. This community consists of 199 evangelic christian-baptists. Its composition is clearly evident from the table cited below (data was gathered in 1958):

Social Composition	Sex	Education	Age
Workers -- 24	Men -- 64	Semi-literate and those with lower education -- 190	Over 40 years -- 130
Peasants -- 156	Women -- 135		From 25 to 40 years -- 50
Professional and Office Workers -- 6		Those with secondary education -- 9	Up to 25 years -- 19
Invalids and Pensioners -- 13			

The situation is similar in other communities, taken as a whole, for other oblasts. At the Belgorskaya Oblast, for instance, which contains 1,227 thousand inhabitants, there are some 1,898 members in the evangelical christian-baptist community. Out of that group 1,506 are women, 1,218 semi-literate people, and 892 are persons over 60 years of age.

The ratio of baptists at the Belgorskaya Oblast to the total population is very negligible, only 0.15%. But the presence of even this minute number of sectarians is cause for concern, since we are proceeding towards a communist society, which will be entirely free of any religious residues.

Such data are characteristic for other sectarian communities as well. As evident from the facts cited above and other similar data, religious beliefs are widespread primarily among the kolkhoz peasantry. The workers are subjected to religious influence to a far lesser degree. This is explained by the fact that the workers' class in our country is concentrated in large industrial and cultural centers and comes under the influence of advanced socialist ideology to a greater degree. This is also substantiated by the fact that the workers, who have not yet freed themselves of religious influence, are predominantly found in cities with few industries, and at plants that are situated in rural areas (primarily those of the light and processing industry).

A higher percentage of religiousness among the kolkhoz peasantry (as compared with the workers), is also explained first of all by the fact that the force of tradition, of the old conservative ways of life is still felt in the villages. Vestiges of the old ways are still quite pronounced in the village by comparison with the city, and an adherence to certain customs and traditions, despite the fact, however, that the kolkhoz way of life has without a doubt undergone a radical change throughout the years of Soviet government.

V.I. Lenin wrote that the force of tradition, the force of habits -- is a fearful force. It is the force of tradition



or a fear of criticism by parents or friends who are believers that forces people to baptize their children, to get married in church and to observe religious holidays.

In addition to that, religiousness among the kolkhoz peasantry is explained by inadequate mass-cultural work in the village, and a poor organization of many sources of culture. Unfortunately, we have not yet eliminated all such deficiencies everywhere. A person who strives to satisfy his spiritual requirements is frequently left to himself, and then a religious preacher may occupy himself with his soul, which frequently leads to most regrettable results.

At the same time it is also impossible to ignore the fact that the welfare of kolkhoz members depends not only on their labor, and the degree and quality of the technology, but frequently it depends on the whims of nature, which man has not yet learned to control completely. Even though there is an ever diminishing dependence of the harvest on the whims of nature, it brings a feeling of uncertainty in certain people, which can not fail to reflect on the preservation of religious feelings.

Causes for the dissemination of the remnants of religious feelings among the peasantry become clearer after the believers are classified according to sex. The cited data shows that women, especially older women, make up the majority of the believers in sectarian communities. A similar situation exists among the believers of the orthodox church.

Exact data regarding the proportion of men to women believers in the orthodox church may not be cited: it is not available. But on the basis of various facts which are at the disposal of the researchers in the given problem, it is possible to suppose that the number of women believers amounts to approximately 75%-80% of the overall number of believers.

The October Socialist Revolution destroyed the economic and political oppression, which forced the women to turn to religion. Both women and men were granted equal rights. Woman has never before in history occupied such a high place as the one she occupies at the present time in the socialist countries. The Communist Party and the Soviet Government accomplish much in order to facilitate the household chores for the woman. A growing number of child nurseries, public cafeterias, kindergardens, laundries and other enterprises are built every year. However, despite the increasing number of infant nurseries and other public service enterprises, that facilitate the woman's work and position, there is an obvious lack in them. The responsibility for the family, children and the management of a household falls squarely on the woman's shoulders. The woman's workday, as a result of that, is considerably longer than that of the men, especially in the case of women-kolkhoz members, who are forced to spend more time in the kitchen than do the city women. The household chores of a woman, according to Lenin, being one of

the most unproductive occupations, contain nothing that could be conducive to a further development of the woman; quite on the contrary, it limits her horizon and weakens her will. Therefore it is not by coincidence that there is a high percentage of believers among the housewives. At the Belgorodskaya community of the evangelical christian baptists out of 1,506 women some 739 are housewives. At the same time we have an almost complete lack of individual work with women, especially with the believers. The necessity for such work is becoming more urgent as a result of the fact that at the present time the church, especially the sectarians, devote their principal attention to individual work with women. The church and the sectarians realize the woman's role in the family and in the education of the children. They see in her a guardian of the family traditions, those types of life which have always been of the most conservative character and which served as a refuge for various religious superstitions. The fact that it is specifically the woman who represents the main backbone of the traditional conservative way of life is frequently overlooked by our propagandists, but is used to great advantage by the religious functionaries.

The resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU "On the Tasks of Party Propaganda Under the Current Conditions" specifically stresses the importance and the necessity of subordinating propaganda work among the women to the purpose of "raising their ideological demands and interests; an involvement of women, especially of the home makers, in an active social-political life, and a struggle against religious superstitions..."

Preoccupation with production work and household chores frequently deprives the women, especially those in the village, of a possibility to further their education. It is not a coincidence that a majority of the women believers are semi-literate women or those with a minimum of education.

As far as the age grouping of the believers is concerned, the cited data shows that the majority of the believers are elderly people (those over fifty years of age); there is a considerably smaller number of middle-aged people and very few young people. This is explained by a fact that in our country broad avenues into life are open for the youth. It clings to the old ways least of all, it strives towards the new, towards light and science. Soviet youth, who are energetic and full of life, are not interested in sermons about the transitory nature of everything on earth. Books, movies, and the theater became their constant companions.

The fact that the church is deprived of such a significant means of influencing the growing youth as the school, since our schools are separated from the church, is of very great importance. The family is the broadest channel which they attempt to use in order to influence the youth. At the present time the church and the sectarians are particularly concerned about the

problem of getting young people to join their ranks.

It must be noted that the activity of the religious people among the youth meets with a certain degree of success. The orthodox church and sectarian organizations, facing the fact that predominantly elderly people are left in the religious organizations, are striving to rejuvenate the ranks of their followers and preachers by attracting the young people, who are completing religious seminaries and actively engage in sermons propounding the religious viewpoint.

The clergy is working among the youth in order to attract the more literate and cultured ones among them into religious educational institutions. Prior to 1957 the number of applications for admission to seminaries was growing. Starting with 1958, however, as a result of intensified anti-religious work, the number of such applications decreased appreciably. During the 1959/60 school year there was a considerable shortage of students at some of the seminaries. This occurred, for example, at the Stavropol' Seminary. The local propagandists of atheism led by I.O. Rudenko, conducted extensive individual work with the seminary students. As a result of this, fourteen people resigned from the seminary in 1959, and in early 1960 five more people left. Individual work was also conducted with the youth who wanted to enter the seminaries. Last year first year courses at the seminary were not conducted.

Lately, as a result of an intensified scientific-atheistic work, there has been an increased number of cases where young people have drawn away from sectarian organizations. Some of them (a former baptist Lepikhov, from Donbass, a former five-day adventist Myachin, from the Far East and others), after breaking with sectarian communities, exposed the activity of these communities and of religious superstitions in general.

For a successful elimination of religious prejudices that are disseminated among certain groups of young people, it is necessary for our scientific-atheistic propaganda to be of a lively, popular character, so that it would be helpful in the education of the young generation in a spirit of all-prevailing optimism and a firm belief in the final triumph of communism.

As far as the characteristic of the religiousness of the population is concerned, it is possible to point out, according to national indices, that religious superstitions have survived primarily among those peoples of our country who lived under feudal or patriarchal conditions (the republics of Siberia and Central Asia). It must also be noted that in the republics of Central Asia, in areas where the islamic faith is widespread, a rebirth of various types of faiths is observed, which existed before islamism and along with it. Soviet ethnographers, in referring to the relationship of islamism to the ancient faiths in Uzbekistan, point out that:

"A different situation was created by the variegated

complex of religious concepts and actions -- mysticism, magic, cult of ancestors and nature, cult of saints and their graves, shamanism and etc. -- which existed along with islamism. The fact that this complex was always rooted in the very essence of family life, which was one of the most conservative nuclei of society, explains its great significance at the present time. The guardian of these residues is the woman. In this sense it is possible to talk of a 'woman's religion'." (Sovetskaya Etnograpfiya, No. 2, 1957, page 62).

The degree of religious feeling in regions which only recently underwent a socialist transformation is still great. This applies to the population of Moldavia, Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia, as well as to the Baltic republics (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia). The reactionary catholic clergy is attempting to preserve the nationalist and religious superstitions in those countries at all costs. But under the influence of an intensified scientific-atheistic propaganda, there is a decrease in religious moods in those areas at this time, which is especially characteristic of the Moldavian SSR.

The cited analysis of the demographic data permits a judgment of the causes leading to a preservation of religious feelings among some of our workers. Facts which hinder the process of a gradual atrophy of religious superstitions may be divided into objective and subjective ones.

The first group primarily includes the sociological factors -- public consciousness which lags behind the tumultuously developing life of the society. This factor is manifested in extreme conservatism of religious consciousness, which originated on a basis of the socialist forms of economy and the different forms of class oppression which it spawned, as well as on a basis of limited experience in life, which is closely associated with traditional habits. The influence of this factor, however, should not be exaggerated. Under socialism and in view of the fact that the Soviet people are consciously building a new society, a new life and a new morality, the lag between public consciousness and communal life is constantly decreasing. The role of the subjective factor increases considerably under the conditions of a socialist society. We are stressing this condition, since certain workers on the cultural front attempt to utilize this general factor for justifying their own passivity on the ideological front of the struggle against religious viewpoints.

The most important sociological factor conducive to a preservation of religious residues is the influence of the capitalist world, which is very much interested in the preservation and implantation of religious prejudices in the consciousness of the workers of our country. By using all available means: radio, press and etc. -- the bourgeois propaganda is aspiring to revive religious superstition. "The Voice of America", "Radio Free Europe" and other radio stations broadcast special

religious sermons designed for workers of the various nationalities of the USSR. It is quite clear that the preservation and revival of religious residues among the population of the USSR is important to the imperialist bourgeoisie. This would be of assistance to it in the struggle against socialism.

All these, however, are merely general causes for the existence of religious residues. Specific causes of religious feelings are greatly varied among the various peoples, among the various layers of the population and age groups. They are rooted in historical, geographical and living conditions of the people. An important role in the preservation of religious residues is the emotional aspect of a person's life. This aspect is in the forefront in the case of many believers.

At the same time the indicated causes still do not yield a full answer to the question as to why remnants of religion are still preserved in our country at the present time. Yes, it is true that these general causes fail to explain the fact that during a period of grandiose transformations that are taking place in public life in our country, an increase in the welfare of the masses, the liquidation of the contradiction between physical and mental work as well as between the city and the village, there is a simultaneous revival of religious feelings among certain layers of the population of the USSR.

In order to explain that, it is necessary for us to take into consideration the subjective factors as well. An atrophy of religion and a growth of atheistic feelings is a natural process of development of common consciousness of the workers of our country. It is specifically for this reason that the role of subjective moments increased in this process. The bearers of the old ideology, the clergy, are attempting to slow down and to hinder the natural process of the atrophy of religion with all their might. V.I. Lenin pointed out at the First Congress of Women Workers that we "...are obligated to the influence of priests" for the existence of various religious superstitions (Works, Vol. 28, page 161). By utilizing the inadequacies in the propaganda of socialist ideology, by speculating on the complexity and contradiction of communal life, the religious group developed an active program of propaganda promulgating a viewpoint that is alien to us. It is known, however, that a least weakening in socialist ideology brings about an intensification of bourgeois ideology.

In our opinion the subjective causes are: (1) an activation in the program conducted by religious functionaries; (2) weakness of our atheistic propaganda under present conditions -- these are the principal reasons which explain the present condition of religiousness among the lagging group of workers. It is these subjective factors that acquire a decisive significance during the present stage.

An active program conducted by the church functionaries

and sectarians among the broad masses of the population is expressed in the fact that at the present time they use different, carefully thought out forms and methods for drawing people into religious organizations. This systematic activity, which is being conducted with a consideration of the specific conditions, is frequently successful. By adapting to present day conditions, the church functionaries and the sectarians are modernizing the religious ideology. At the same time they are attempting to perfect the forms and methods for affecting the masses. They devote special attention to an intensification of the missionary-propaganda activity.

Monasteries, especially such well known ones that are respected by the believers, as the Troitse-Sergiyevskaya Lavra (city of Zagorsk, Moskovskaya Oblast), the Kiyev-Pecherskiy Monastery (Pskovskaya Oblast).

#### Specific Methods for a Study of Religious Residues.

The monks utilize their trips to various places in order to propagandize their "sacred things". They are carrying on an extensive correspondence with their admirers and are attempting to recruit the young people from among those who visit them into the monasteries. The pilgrims, after returning from the monasteries, actively propagandize religious ideas.

Let us take the Pochayevskaya Lavra as an example, which performs a peculiar role in the religious world. It is situated on the territory of Western Ukraine, where the uniatic church was performing an important role a short period of time ago. [See Note] The Pocharskaya Lavra was a stronghold of orthodoxy in that area. It had many more worshippers in the other areas of Russia and beyond its borders than in Western Ukraine itself. It annually attracts a great number of pilgrims. Everything in it, from its location to its various "holy relics", is calculated to have the most profound influence on the feelings of a believer.

[Note] The uniatic church represents a peculiar merger of the orthodox and catholic churches, which occurred in 1596. The uniatic church essentially observed the orthodox rituals, being at the same time subordinated to the Vatican. In 1946 the union was liquidated by the L'vov church council.

The sectarians utilize still more variegated methods for affecting the believers. The utilization of music and choir singing during church services is designed to instill a special feeling of reverence in the believers. Spiritual songs of the sectarians are frequently based on the tunes of popular Soviet and folk songs and are sometimes not devoid of poetics.

Aspiring to attract the young people and by exploiting the weakness in our cultural work in certain rayons, the sectarians create choir and musical circles, conduct evening parties associated with some family festive occasion, where sermons

about religious morality are read. The sectarians attempt to combine the celebration of Soviet holidays with their own communities, organizing, for example, their own May Day celebrations on the first of May. At the present time the leadership of the evangelical christians gave the following direction to its members: to conduct work not by extending it by attempting to increase the number of sectarians but by intensifying their work and by consolidating the religiousness among the already existing members of the community. The sectarians place special emphasis on individual work with the believers. The object of their attentions is usually a person who experienced some kind of misfortune in life. By extending material aid to such a person, they strive to influence the person to join their community, by influencing him through their representatives, especially women. Facts regarding how, being outside the attention of the social organization, the people become members of the sectarian communities, were cited on more than one occasion in the Soviet press. There are cases where the sectarians try to spread their influence to the youth attending schools.

It is possible to make a definite conclusion on the basis of this, about the fact that wherever the scientific-atheistic work is poorly organized, where it fails to receive its proper share of attention, in those places these situations are exploited by the church and sectarians to intensify the religious feelings of the masses. Whereas where our atheistic work is intensified, the degree of religious feelings decreases. This refers to the constantly increasing role of the subjective factor in the surmounting of religious residues during the period of a comprehensive building of the communist society.

In pointing out certain successes attained in anti-religious work, it is impossible to shut one's eyes at the deficiencies that are still inherent in our scientific-atheistic propaganda. The training of skilled cadres of workers in the field of scientific atheism is still poorly organized. The party, trade union and komsomol personnel as well as the well theoretically prepared cadres of intelligentsia are not drawn into atheistic propaganda to a sufficient degree. The most important means for the ideological influence of the masses of workers are poorly utilized.

The scientific elaboration of problems pertaining to atheism is conducted poorly. Up to the present time our scientific institutions, which concern themselves with atheistic problems, have published a very small number of works on the present day religious ideology, whereas the need for such works for the propagandists of atheism is very great. Until now more or less satisfactory investigations on methods for drawing the masses away from religion have not been published, not published because no one, in essence, has really delved into this matter. Attempts by isolated scientific institutions (the departments of

history, religion and atheism, that are a part of the Institute of History and the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences USSR), to engage in the study of this problem have not yet yielded any serious results.

Popular atheistic literature, published during the post war years, fails to answer the demands of the propagandists of atheism. In the practice of scientific-atheistic propaganda, basic emphasis is made on sporadic lectures. But how is it possible to struggle exclusively with lectures against all that is being done by the church and sectarian preachers over extended periods of time on a systematic basis?

It is true that recently other forms and methods of work have been introduced into the practice of scientific-atheistic propaganda: evenings devoted to specific subjects, evenings of questions and answers, theoretical conferences, oral magazines, meetings with people who have broken with religion and so on. But these measures have not attained the proper level everywhere. The most effective method of anti-religious propaganda is systematic individual work with the believers in their homes. It must be used to counterbalance the activities by the church and the sectarians.

The resolution of the Central Committee CPSU "On the Tasks of Party Propaganda Under Current Conditions" stresses the necessity of reaching every person in the ideological work. It must be noted that in our anti-religious propaganda this directive is not yet fully observed. Atheistic propaganda is frequently conducted among the non-believers. The believers, however, frequently remain beyond the sphere of our influence.

The study of specific forms of religious manifestations among the masses provides a possibility for the evolution of a differentiated, specific approach to the problem of surmounting religious residues. Religiousness, as already pointed out, is most widespread among women. Therefore principal attention should be devoted to anti-religious work among women. It is necessary to draw the women into active communal life, which is a most important condition for freeing them from religious dope.

A similarly specific approach must be made to anti-religious work among the young people and children (as pointed out above, the sectarians and the church are now devoting particular attention towards attracting the young people and children into their ranks), among the kolkhoz peasantry, among individual groups of workers and intelligentsia, while at the same time taking into consideration the national characteristics.

The utilization of more refined methods and forms of religious propaganda by the sectarians and the church is accompanied by corresponding changes in religious ideology. It is impossible to think that religious ideology is something permanent and unchanging, something that will always be with us. Profound social transformations can not fail to reflect on the



content of religious ideology. Even though the teachings of the church and sectarians remained a basically inert, and anti-scientific teaching, it is still impossible not to note those changes which have occurred in the dissemination of religious teachings in our country in recent times. This is a result of the special position of the church under conditions of a socialist society, which was mentioned above. The religious theoreticians are forced to adapt themselves to new conditions, to modify the content of their sermons in accordance with the changes which have occurred in the consciousness of the workers. These changes, however, in the interpretation of religious ideology, affect only certain individual portions of religious teachings, but not its essence.

Our party press (the magazine Kommunist (Communist), No. 7, 1958, and the newspaper Pravda, 29 August 1959) have already pointed out that recently the church and especially the sectarians have taken a course of reconciliation between science and religion and a degree of identification of christianity with communism. The religious functionaries are now propounding an "alliance" between science and religion. They stipulate that religion and science are not only uncontradictory, but quite on the contrary, supplement each other, and therefore an association between them is natural and necessary.

Christian ideologists assert that christianity is akin to communism, that Christ was allegedly first to call people to freedom, equality and fraternity. The sectarian baptists, in the 30's, have talked themselves to a point where they believed that Christ was apparently the first socialist and communist on earth. The church and especially the sectarians have lately been devoting considerable attention to the problem of morality. They assert that religion is the main stalwart of morality, that morality without religion is impossible. They attempt to set themselves off as the moral mentors of the people.

Religious ideologists are attempting to unify socialism with christianity primarily with the aid of moral arguments. The present day church functionaries consider that with the assistance of the religious-moral norms propounded by them, they are in a position to influence certain aspects of social life, "the lord's word" supposedly sheds light on the social phenomena and helps people to understand them. "It is true that christianity does not provide the norms of a proper character and does not mould the external forms of society. But as a religion of 'spirit and truth' (Jonas 4.23) it contains eternal ideas and either directly or indirectly affects human society in its progress and perfection." Zhurnal Moskovskoy Patriarkhii (Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate) No. 2, 1958, page 74.

Ideologists of the Russian church attempted to associate religion with science during the pre-revolutionary time, but this was not widespread at that time. Religion was the dominant

ideology of tsarist Russia, and the church felt rather secure. In comparing religious faith with atheism, the church considered the main argument in its favor, one which deprecated atheism, to be that atheism was less widespread than religion. Under the present conditions, however, in the age of a tumultuous development of science, the religious ideologists are compelled to devote more attention to the relationship between science and religion.

The revelation of all these problems will undoubtedly intensify our ideological struggle against religious superstitions.

The decisions of the historic 21st Congress of the Party pointed us in the direction of a struggle against the remnants of capitalism in the conscience of the people. A specific approach to the ideology of present day religious organizations, and a specific consideration of the present day believer are all conducive to an intensification of our ideological struggle against religious superstitions, as the most harmful and very durable remnants of the past. The specific nature of scientific-religious work -- is the guarantee of its effectiveness.